

MODULAR AND PORTABLE COLLECTIBLES

2 DISPLAY AND STORAGE CASE

4 BACKGROUND

6 Field of the Technology

This invention relates to portable cases for storing and displaying collectibles
8 such as miniature toy action figures. More particularly, it relates to a case that stores
each collectible in noncontact with the case or other collectibles and combines with other
10 identical cases to increase total storage capacity.

12 Prior Art

Miniature action figures have been popular for decades, not only as toys for
14 children but also as collectibles for all ages. Similarly, more than action figures, other
miniatures have been collected as well, such as airplanes, cars, and military equipment.
16 For purposes herein, all such miniatures are deemed included in the term "collectibles."

A need to safely store and/or display these collectibles has created a need for
18 collectible cases. The case may comprise a box with a number of individual
compartments, typically with a collectible in each compartment. Loosely contained in
20 such a compartment, the collectible is free to bounce and bang against compartment
walls, which is prone to damage the collectible. Even when a filler such as Styrofoam or
22 other bedding is included in the compartment to hold the collectible from bouncing
against the case, it rubs paint off the collectible. A preferred case would support a

number of collectibles individually in noncontact with the case or case filler or other
2 material.

It is often advantageous to transport the collectibles within their storage and
4 display case. A display case generally has a single row of collectibles so all collectibles
are in view. Thus, the number of collectibles that can be displayed in a case that can be
6 hand-carried is limited. Transporting a large number of collectibles thus requires several
cases, which makes transporting them inconvenient. It would be more convenient to be
8 able to transport several display cases together.

10 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A portable collectibles storage and display case is presented that protects
12 collectibles mounted on a base from damage by individually securing the collectible base
within the case with the collectible itself in noncontact with another object. This prevents
14 the collectible from hitting the case or another object or rubbing against something in the
case.

16 The portable case is also modular in that several identical cases can be secured
together, both stacked and side-by-side. An adjustable handle on each case can be
18 removed for case stacking; a single handle can be reoriented on the combination of cases
to lift the combined cases together from the single handle. The combined side-by-side
20 cases are linked through a releasable hinge on each side so the cases can be easily hinged
open on one side hinge to display their contents by releasing the hinge connection on the
22 other side.

Typically, two cases are first interconnected front to front where a clear,
transparent door closes the case and through which the collectibles within can be viewed,
though not necessarily. This prevents the door from inadvertently being opened during
transport. The combined pair may be stacked on another combined pair, creating a four-
case set. The combined pair may also be combined back-to-back with another combined
pair; that is, the back of one in the combined pair may be releasably secured to the back
of one of another combined pair to form a four-case set side by side, which can be
stacked on another side-by-side four-case set for an eight-case set. Clearly, the eight-case
set can be stacked on another side-by-side four-case set for a twelve-case set. With the
cases combinable back-to-back, front-to-front, and vertically stacked, any such
combination of cases is available to the user. Side-by-side combinations can be hinged
opened for viewing without fully separating the cases. Stacked cases similarly hinge
open together.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a front prospective view of the transportable collectibles case viewed
through the clear, transparent front door and showing fingers for holding collectible bases
and matching hinge halves on each front side suitable for hingedly securing two cases
front to front, steps on the front bottom matching rings on the front top suitable for
securing two cases stacked, with an adjustable handle on its top.

FIG. 2 is an enlarged portion of the case of FIG. 1 including typical collectibles
on bases held in the case between the fingers near the bottom and the base bottom.

Further shown are fingers near the top holding a typical collectible between these fingers
2 and the top.

FIG. 3 is an enlarged portion of the case of FIG. 2 showing collectible bases held
4 under fingers near the bottom and further showing the window pivotably attached
removably at the front bottom on flexible pivot legs around a pivot pin. Next to the door
6 pivot attachment is shown one of a plurality of case feet depending from the case bottom
further than the pivot attachment on one side and the step on the other side.

8 FIG. 4 is a perspective view of two cases combined back-to-back.

FIG. 5 is a top perspective view of the two combined cases of FIG. 4.

10 FIG. 6 is an end perspective view of the two combined cases of FIG. 4.

FIG. 7 partial back perspective view of the case of FIG. 1 a catch plate with a
12 hook on its distal end mounted flexibly and extending from a case window. Also shown
is one of a plurality of feet with a portion extending rearward from the case bottom. Also
14 shown is an eye on flexible legs extending upward from the back above the top, laterally
disposed such that when an identical case is stacked on the case, the rearward-extended
16 portion of the foot of the upper case received into the eye of the lower case as the legs of
the eye flex to allow the foot to pass into the eye. Shown also is the hinge bar extending
18 forward of the front door from the side.

FIG. 8 is a partial back perspective view of the case of FIG. 7 from its other end
20 showing another rearward-extending foot portion. Also shown is a slot for receiving a
catch plate and hook. Shown also is a hooked plate that secures around the hinge bar as
22 the hinge bar is received into channels above and below the hook plate.

FIG. 9 is an end perspective view of two cases disposed to connect front to front
2 with a hinge bar moving into engagement with the hooked hook plate.

FIG. 10 is a perspective view of a pair of cases mounted face to face stacked on a
4 second such pair, shown hinged open.

FIG. 11 is perspective view of a combination of twelve cases releasably secured
6 together with a common handle.

8 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The collectibles display case 10 of the present invention comprises a box 12
10 accessible through a clear, transparent door 14 that covers a box front 16. The door 14
typically swings downward on a pivot pin 17 at the box bottom 18 and is latched at a box
12 top 20 by a door loop 22 passing over a latch 24 at the box top 20.

A first plurality of laterally spaced apart fingers 26 near the box bottom 20 extend
14 a short distance toward the door 14 from a box back 28 opposite the door 14. The fingers
26 are thus adapted to removably receive a base 200 on which a collectible 202 is
16 mounted in releasably securing the base 200 between one or more fingers 26 and the base
bottom 20. Thus, each collectible 202 is secured in the case 10 freestanding in
18 noncontact with the box 12 or another object such as another collectible or even
cushioning.

20 A second plurality of laterally spaced apart fingers 30 near the box top 20 extend
a short distance toward the door 14 from the back 28 opposite the door 14. These fingers
22 30 are also adapted to removably receive a base 200 on which a collectible 202 is
mounted, releasably securing the base 200 between one or more fingers 30 and the base

202 near the box top 20 with each collectible also freestanding in noncontact with the box
12 or another object. Typically, the first and second pluralities of laterally spaced apart
fingers 26 and 30 are respectively mounted such that collectibles secured at the box
bottom 20 alternate with collectibles extending into the box secured at the box top 20
with each collectible 202 freestanding in noncontact with another collectible 20.

The case 10 is stackable with a first case 10a stackable on top of a second case
10b with fasteners 32 releasably interconnecting the two boxes. Also, a case 10c is
attachable alongside another case 10d with fasteners 34 releasably interconnecting the
cases alongside, either front-to-front or back-to-back.

A front first side fastener half 36 on a box first side 38 extends forward of the box
front 16 outside of the door 14, and a front second side fastener half 40 that matches the
front first side fastener half 36 is on a box second side 42 opposing the first side 38,
disposed such that as two identical such cases are brought together with fronts opposing,
front first and second side fastener halves of the two cases mutually engage on each side.

The front first side fastener half 36 comprises a vertical hinge bar 44; the front
second side fastener half 40 comprises upper and lower side fastener members 46 and 48
each with a channel 50 adapted to receive the hinge bar 44. The front second side fastener
half 40 further comprises a hook plate 52 with a hook 54 on its distal end 56 between the
upper and lower side fastener members 46 and 48 disposed to engage around the hinge
bar 44 as the hinge bar enters the channels 50. The hook plate 52 attaches intermediate
the box second side 42 with flexure. That is, the hook plate 52 flexes or bends as it is
pushed by a hinge bar 44 urged into engagement with the hook plate 52 moving the hook
54 on the hook plate distal end 56 aside laterally as the hinge bar 44 passes into the

channels 50. The hook plate then resiliently springs back to its unflexed position when
2 the hinge bar is within the channels with the hook around the hinge bar. Similarly, the
hinge bar is removed as it is urged out of the channels and engagement with the hook
4 plate.

The case 10 further comprises a back first side fastener half 58 at a box first side
6 60 extending rearward from the box back 28, and a back second side fastener half 62
matching the back first side fastener half 58, the back second side fastener half 62
8 extending from the back 28 at a box second side 64 opposing the first side 60 such that as
two such cases are brought together with backs opposing, back first and second side
10 fastener halves 58 and 62 of the two cases mutually engage on each case, or box, side.

The back first side fastener half 58 comprises a vertical catch plate 66 with a hook 68 on
12 a distal end 70 attached with flexure to the back first side 60. The back second side
fastener half 62 comprises a slot 72 in the back second side 64 adapted to receive a catch
14 plate 66 with the catch plate hook 68 releasably engaging the back 28 inside the box. The
catch plate 66 extends from the back first side 60 through a window 74 in the back 28
16 such that as two such cases are brought together with backs opposing, on each side the
catch plate 66 extends through the window 74 into engagement in the slot 72 without
18 obstructing the box backs from coming into near face-to-face contact.

Two eyes 76 extend upward from the box back 28 above the top 20 each on
20 flexible legs 78. A first plurality of feet 80 depends downward from the box bottom 18
on which the case 10 stands. Two of those feet 80a and 80b each include a foot portion
22 82 extending rearward of the box 12 in vertical nonalignment with one of the eyes 76
such that such that as an upper, or first, case 10a is brought into stacked relation on a

lower, or second, case 10b with backs aligned, each foot portion 82 that extends rearward of an upper case urges the eye 76 of the lower case 10b outward of the box on its flexible legs 78 until the foot portion 82 extending rearward passes into the eye 76. The eye then resiliently returns from its flex position therein releasably securing the cases together.

When two cases 10c and 10d are instead brought into back to back relation, the eyes 76 are adjacent so as to not engage each other; The two rearward-extending feet 80a and 80b are similarly adjacent.

A ring 84 extends upward from the top 20 at the case, or box, front 16. A step 86 matches the ring 84 and depends downward from the bottom 20 at the front 16, aligned such that as two identical cases 10a and 10b are brought together in stacked relation with fronts aligned, the step 86 fits under the ring 84 of the two cases mutually engaging the cases with the ring of one case hanging from the step of the other case.

A wall-mounting fastener 88 is also provided on the case back 28 that enables the case to be mounted to a wall. It typically comprises a hole 90 through the back 28 through which a screw or the like passes (not shown). A circular ridge 92 on the back 28 spaces the back from the wall.

The case 10 is hand-carried with a carrying handle 94 on its top 20. When the case is combined with other cases, the carrying handle 94 is removed from the cases for ease of stacking. One handle 94 is installed to span between top cases, or boxes. To allow the handle 94 to carry a single case, it fits in a matching pair of raised first tubes 96 aligned longitudinally with the box 12, that is, directed parallel to the box front and back 16 and 28. A second matching pair of raised tubes 98 is provided aligned transversely with the box 12, that is, parallel to box sides 200. When two cases are combined back-to-

back, a single handle 94 is oriented transversely between the boxes with a first handle
2 202 portion fitting in a front member 104 of the transverse pair of raised tubes 98 in a
first case 10b and with a second handle portion 106 fitting in a front member 108 of the
4 transverse pair of raised tubes 98 in a second case 10c. Likewise, When two cases are
combined front-to-front, a single handle 94 is oriented transversely between the boxes
6 with a first handle portion 102 fitting in a back member 110 of the transverse pair of
raised tubes 98 in a first case 10a and with a second handle portion 106 fitting in a back
8 member 112 of the transverse pair of raised tubes 98 in a second case 10b.

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